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1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
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	Dec 06, 1998 *	Jan 25, 1999	Feb 29, 2000 *	Apr 01, 2001 *	May 25, 2002 *	Feb 18, 2003 *		
	Dec 12, 1998 *	Feb 08, 1999	May 10, 2000	Apr 05, 2001	May 27, 2002	Mar 03, 2003 *		
		Feb 23, 1999	May 11, 2000	Apr 18, 2001	Jul 20, 2002 *	Mar 20, 2003 *		
		Apr 20, 1999 *	May 20, 2000	Apr 24, 2001	Sep 22, 2002 *	Mar 20, 2003 *		
			Jun 19, 2000	Jun 29, 2001 *	Sep 24, 2002 *	Mar 25, 2003		
			Jun 20, 2000	Jul 20, 2001	Sep 29, 2002 *	Apr 01, 2003		
			Jun 21, 2000	Sep 22, 2001 *	Nov 20, 2002 *	Apr 19, 2003 *		
			Aug 16, 2000 *		Nov 22, 2002 *	May 30, 2003 *		
			Oct 18, 2000		Nov 26, 2002 *	Jun 06, 2003		
			Oct 19, 2000		Nov 27, 2002	Jun 20, 2003		
			Nov 10, 2000 *		Dec 11, 2002			
			Dec 05, 2000					

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Business & Productivity: Project Management (18 files)

• **Project Planning and Management** Version: 1.0 **NEW!**

The Project Planning and Management template is designed as a generic solution to plan and manage any project from start to finish. Automated features include Gantt scheduling, participant workbook creation, and progress update from remote files.

• **RoofCOST Estimator for Excel** Version: 2.0 **NEW!**

Roofing Installation Cost Estimator for Excel. Designed for roofing contractors, builders, remodelers, and do-it-yourself individuals. Contains cost data and intelligent takeoff area calculator. Automatically creates price quotation.

• **FloorCOST Estimator for Excel** Version: 2.0 **NEW!**

Flooring Installation Cost Estimator for Excel. Designed for flooring contractors, decorators, builders, remodelers, and do-it-yourself individuals. Contains cost data and intelligent takeoff area calculator. Automatically creates price quotation.

• **GeneralCost Estimator for Excel** Version: 2.4 **NEW!**

General Construction Cost Estimator. Designed for contractors, builders, remodelers, estimators. Built-in user-modifiable unit cost data in industry-standard CSI format covering general construction. Automatic city cost adjustment for local area.

• **PaintCOST Estimator for Excel** Version: 2.6 **NEW!**

Painting and Wallcovering Estimator for Excel. Designed for painting contractors, decorators, builders, remodelers, and do-it-yourself individuals. Contains cost data and intelligent takeoff area calculator. Automatically creates price quotation.

• **JobCost Controller for Excel** Version: 2.1 **NEW!**

Construction Jobcost Tracking and Reporting System for Excel. Designed for contractors, builders, remodelers, construction professionals. Tracks construction costs tied to user-defined cost categories, computes accurate forecasts, reports variances.

• **RepairCost Estimator for Excel** Version: 2.5 **NEW!**

Insurance Repair and Restoration Cost Estimator. Designed for repair and restoration contractors and insurance claim adjusters. Built-in user-modifiable unit cost data for local city indexes and all cost categories covering repair construction.

• **RemodelCost Estimator for Excel** Version: 2.3 **NEW!**

RemodelCost Estimator for Excel. Remodel Construction Cost Estimator. Designed for home remodelers, builders, estimators. Built-in user-modifiable unit cost data for local city indexes and all cost categories covering remodel construction.

• **HomeCost Estimator for Excel** Version: 2.3 **NEW!**

HomeCost Estimator for Excel. Home Construction Cost Estimating System. Designed for builders, contractors, architects, adjusters. Built-in modifiable data for local city indexes, class, type and style factors, upgrade and additional feature prices.

• **EasyEx Projectplanner** Version: 1.05 **NEW!**

Illustrate your project graphically in Ms Excel. You are able to indicate a fix period, or with formulas as [= today()-14] a variable period. Administrate clearly the data of the resources. Avoid bottlenecks with critical path scheduling ..

- **HIPAA Security Rule Assistant** Version: 3.0a **NEW!**

HIPAA Security Rule Assistant provides HIPAA covered entities a program to learn and understand the HIPAA Security Rule. It contains Risk Analysis worksheet, sample policy templates, and a sample Incident Report form, and more.

- **Realtor Assistant** Version: 4.0 **NEW!**

Realtor Assistant - This program was written to provide the realtor with tools to simply track clients, listings, etc. Also, contains a few other tools to help in organization and work load planning and so forth.

- **PlanBee project management planning tool** Version: 2.0b **NEW!**

Critical Path Project Management Planning tool. Inexpensive alternative to MS Project. Reports, PERT charts and Gantt charts may be either printed, or copied to the clipboard for pasting into other programs.

- **Personal Timeclock** Version: 4.2 **NEW!**

Personal Timeclock: Tracks and reports your computer usage by project and category. It can help you with client billing, time management, and can provide the information needed at tax time to justify a deduction for business use of your computer.

- **HIPAA Security Rule Assistant** Version: 3.0a **NEW!**

HIPAA Security Rule Assistant provides HIPAA covered entities a program to learn and understand the HIPAA Security Rule. It contains Risk Analysis worksheet, sample policy templates, and a sample Incident Report form, and more.

- **SmartDraw** Version: 6.50 **NEW!**

SmartDraw is the complete drawing tool for flowcharts, org charts, business presentations, networks, floorplans and more with SmartDraw. Includes over 30,000 business and technical images.

- **Recipe Catalog** Version: 4.0.0 **NEW!**

Recipe Catalog stores your favorite recipes and gives you detailed nutrition information. It also allows you to keep a daily food diary to keep track of your nutrition needs. Recipe Catalog comes with a database of 2000 ingredients.

- **EnvisionAide** Version: Shareware **NEW!**

With this tool you can achieve quicker and more creative research using documents, the internet and discussions. It can also help you make clear well-focused reports and so help a team work together. A tutorial and help-guide is included.



☐ Welcome to homeimprovement.com. Scroll down for text links

Welcome to Hometime, the source for information on home improvement, remodeling, and home repair. Our website is divided into 4 main categories: Projects, Info, TV, and Store (more detailed descriptions are listed below). We hope you will enjoy your visit, and come back often!

PROJECTS: How-To Information on all sorts of home improvement projects. We have divided our how-to information into 13 categories which are listed in a column on the lefthand side of all our main pages.

TV: Find out which episodes of "Hometime" are airing on PBS and TLC, locate a products used on one of our shows, and download autographed photos and bloopers.

STORE: Shop online for home improvement and repair videos and books, as well as project and home plans, CD-ROMs, hardware items, and "Hometime" wearables.

INFO: Information about the company, Dean and Robin, and the website. Includes a table of contents, FAQ, site search, and more.



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L Number	Hits	Search Text	DB	Time stamp
1	101068	(training or instruction\$5 or (how ADJ to)) NEAR5 (module\$2 or software or device\$2)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:33
2	3656	((training or instruction\$5 or (how ADJ to)) NEAR5 (module\$2 or software or device\$2)) AND ((cost\$3 or price\$4 or pricing) SAME (task\$2 or job\$2 or activit\$4))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:34
3	16325	(training or instructional or (how ADJ to)) NEAR5 (module\$2 or software or device\$2)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:35
4	502	((training or instructional or (how ADJ to)) NEAR5 (module\$2 or software or device\$2)) AND ((cost\$3 or price\$4 or pricing) SAME (task\$2 or job\$2 or activit\$4))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:35
5	848	((training or instructional or (how ADJ to)) NEAR5 (module\$2 or software or device\$2)) SAME (task\$2 or job or jobs or activit\$5)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:35
6	146	((training or instructional or (how ADJ to)) NEAR5 (module\$2 or software or device\$2)) SAME (task\$2 or job or jobs or activit\$5) AND ((cost\$3 or price\$4 or pricing) SAME (task\$2 or job\$2 or activit\$4))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:46
7	0	((cost or benefit) NEAR2 (analysis or analyses)) SAME (professional or contractor\$4) SAME ((do NEAR3 yourself) or self or yourself)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:47
8	0	((cost or benefit) NEAR2 (analysis or analyses)) SAME (professional or contractor\$4) SAME ((do NEAR3 yourself) or self or yourself or (on NEAR2 own))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:48
9	187	((cost or benefit)) SAME (professional or contractor\$4) SAME ((do NEAR3 yourself) or self or yourself or (on NEAR2 own))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:50
10	55	((cost or benefit)) SAME (professional or contractor\$4) SAME ((do NEAR3 yourself) or oneself or yourself or (on NEAR2 own))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:55
11	44	(cheap\$4 or expensive\$3 or economical\$6) SAME (professional or contractor\$4) SAME ((do NEAR3 yourself) or oneself or yourself or (on NEAR2 own))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 17:56
12	17	(cheap\$4 or ((more or less) NEAR2 (expensive\$3 or economical\$6))) SAME (professional or contractor\$4) SAME ((do NEAR3 yourself) or oneself or yourself or (on NEAR2 own))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 18:32
13	738	(home ADJ improvement) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 18:33

14	228	((home ADJ improvement) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)) AND ((how ADJ to) or help or instructions)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 18:33
<i>Kwiz</i> 15	140	((home ADJ improvement) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)) AND ((how ADJ to) or help or instructions)) AND (cost\$2 or price\$2 or pricing)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 19:10
16	7	((home ADJ improvement) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)) AND ((how ADJ to) or help or instructions)) AND ((cost\$2 or price\$2 or pricing) NEAR5 (task\$2 or project\$2 or activit\$4))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 18:52
17	2	("6345258") or ("5950206")).PN.	USPAT	2004/05/26 18:52
18	488	(estimat\$6 or determin\$6 or calculat\$6) NEAR5 (cost\$2 or price\$2 or pricing) NEAR5 (construction\$2 or (home ADJ improvement))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 19:11
19	0	((estimat\$6 or determin\$6 or calculat\$6) NEAR5 (cost\$2 or price\$2 or pricing) NEAR5 (construction\$2 or (home ADJ improvement))) AND (do NEAR2 yourself)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/05/26 19:11

East

Number	Hits	Search Text	DB	Time stamp
1	7	((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)) SAME (train\$6 or instruct\$6 or direct\$6)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 16:12
2	27	((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)) AND (train\$6 or instruct\$6 or direct\$6)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 16:11
3	20	((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)) AND (train\$6 or instruct\$6 or direct\$6)) not (((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself)) SAME (train\$6 or instruct\$6 or direct\$6))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 16:11
4	64	((home or house) ADJ improvement) SAME (train\$6 or instruct\$6 or direct\$6)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 16:12
5	68	((home or house) ADJ improvement\$2) SAME (train\$6 or instruct\$6 or direct\$6)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 16:15
6	54	(estimat\$6 NEAR5 (cost or costs)) SAME ((construction\$2 or (home ADJ improvement)) NEAR5 project\$2)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 16:19
7	0	((estimat\$6 NEAR5 (cost or costs)) SAME ((construction\$2 or (home ADJ improvement)) NEAR5 project\$2)) AND ((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 16:20
8	194	((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 17:10
9	0	((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself))) SAME (help)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 17:10
10	2	((weekend ADJ warrior\$2) or (do ADJ it ADJ yourself))) SAME (instruction\$3)	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 17:16
11	451	training ADJ module\$1	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 17:16
12	8	(training ADJ module\$1) SAME (construction or (home ADJ improvement\$1))	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 18:18
13	264	learning ADJ object\$1	USPAT; US-PGPUB; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/04/19 18:20

14	0	("2001004749").PN.	USPAT; US-PGPUB	2004/04/19 18:20
15	1	("20010044749").PN.	USPAT; US-PGPUB	2004/04/19 18:20

Your SELECT statement is:

s ((should(3n)do(2n)yourself) and (home()improvement)) not py>1999

*Dialog
dalog*

Items	File
-------	------

-----	-----
-------	-------

1	15: ABI/Inform(R)_1971-2004/Jun 09
2	16: Gale Group PROMT(R)_1990-2004/Jun 09

Processing

Examined 50 files

>>>I/O error in file 101

Examined 100 files

1	147: The Kansas City Star_1995-2003/Sep 26
8	148: Gale Group Trade & Industry DB_1976-2004/Jun 09

Examined 150 files

Examined 200 files

Examined 250 files

1	427: Fort Worth Star-Telegram_1993-2004/Feb 23
---	--

Examined 300 files

1	486: Press-Telegram_1992- 2004/Jun 08
2	492: Arizona Repub/Phoenix Gaz_19862002/Jan 06

Examined 350 files

2	541: SEC Online(TM) Annual Repts_1997/Sep W3
10	545: Investext(R)_1982-2004/Jun 08
1	570: Gale Group MARS(R)_1984-2004/Jun 09
2	582: Augusta Chronicle_1996- 2004/Jun 08
1	583: Gale Group Globalbase(TM)_1986-2002/Dec 13

Examined 400 files

1	608: KR/T Bus.News._1992-2004/Jun 09
1	621: Gale Group New Prod.Annou.(R)_1985-2004/Jun 07
4	634: San Jose Mercury_Jun 1985-2004/Jun 08
2	635: Business Dateline(R)_1985-2004/Jun 09
2	638: Newsday/New York Newsday_1987-2004/Jun 08
3	640: San Francisco Chronicle_1988-2004/Jun 09
1	649: Gale Group Newswire ASAP(TM)_2004/Jun 08

Examined 450 files

1	702: Miami Herald_1983-2004/Jun 08
3	704: (Portland)The Oregonian_1989-2004/Jun 08
3	706: (New Orleans)Times Picayune_1989-2004/Jun 09
1	713: Atlanta J/Const._1989-2004/Jun 06
2	714: (Baltimore) The Sun_1990-2004/Jun 09
2	716: Daily News Of L.A._1989-2004/Jun 07
1	718: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette_Jun 1990-2004/Jun 09
1	719: (Albany) The Times Union_Mar 1986-2004/Jun 08
1	724: (Minneapolis)Star Tribune_1989-1996/Feb 04
10	727: Canadian Newspapers_1990-2004/Jun 09
1	732: San Francisco Exam._1990- 2000/Nov 21
3	734: Dayton Daily News_Oct 1990- 2004/Jun 07
1	735: St. Petersburg Times_1989- 2004/Jun 08
2	738: (Allentown) The Morning Call_1990-2004/Jun 08

Examined 500 files

1	741: (Norfolk)Led./Pil._1990-2004/Jun 06
2	743: (New Jersey)The Record_1989-2004/Jun 08
1	781: ProQuest Newsstand_1998-2004/Jun 09
1	813: PR Newswire_1987-1999/Apr 30

Examined 550 files

2	980: Sarasota Herald-Tribune_1996-2004/Jun 08
3	992: NewsRoom 2003

39 files have one or more items; file list includes 558 files.
One or more terms were invalid in 102 files.

new

Dialog

Your SELECT statement is:
s (xactware or iskills?) and (learning()objects) and py<=1999

Items	File
-----	-----
Examined 50 files	
Examined 100 files	
Examined 150 files	
Examined 200 files	
Examined 250 files	
Examined 300 files	
Examined 350 files	
Examined 400 files	
Examined 450 files	
Examined 500 files	
Examined 550 files	

No files have one or more items; file list includes 557 files.
One or more terms were invalid in 101 files.

Your SELECT statement is:

s (cheaper or less()expensive) (5n) (do(2n)yourself) (5n) (professional? or contractor? ?)

Items	File
-----	-----
1	15: ABI/Inform(R)_1971-2004/Jun 09
1	16: Gale Group PROMT(R)_1990-2004/Jun 09
1	20: Dialog Global Reporter_1997-2004/Jun 09
Examined 50 files	
>>>I/O error in file 101	
Examined 100 files	
Examined 150 files	
Examined 200 files	
Examined 250 files	
1	432: Tampa Tribune_1998-2004/Jun 06
Examined 300 files	
1	484: Periodical Abs Plustext_1986-2004/May W5
1	492: Arizona Repub/Phoenix Gaz_19862002/Jan 06
Examined 350 files	
>>>I/O error in file 545	
Examined 400 files	
2	608: KR/T Bus.News._1992-2004/Jun 09
1	654: US Pat.Full._1976-2004/Jun 08
Examined 450 files	
1	703: USA Today_1989-2004/Jun 09
2	704: (Portland)The Oregonian_1989-2004/Jun 08
1	719: (Albany) The Times Union_Mar 1986-2004/Jun 08
1	723: The Wichita Eagle_1990-2004/Jun 08
4	727: Canadian Newspapers_1990-2004/Jun 09
1	734: Dayton Daily News_Oct 1990- 2004/Jun 07
Examined 500 files	
1	742: (Madison)Cap.Tim/Wi.St.J_1990-2004/Jun 08
2	762: Euromonitor Market Res._1991-2004/Apr
1	765: Frost & Sullivan_1992-1999/Apr
2	766: (R)Kalorama Info Market Res._1993-2000/Aug
4	781: ProQuest Newsstand_1998-2004/Jun 09
1	810: Business Wire_1986-1999/Feb 28
Examined 550 files	
2	990: NewsRoom Current Mar 1 -2004/Jun 09
1	992: NewsRoom 2003
1	993: NewsRoom 2002
1	994: NewsRoom 2001
2	995: NewsRoom 2000

25 files have one or more items; file list includes 558 files.
One or more terms were invalid in 3 files.

KmZ

· Your SELECT statement is:

s (pro or pros) (5n) (con or cons) (10n) (do()youself) (10n) (professional? or contractor? ?)

	Items	File
	-----	-----
	Examined	50 files
>>>I/O	error in	file 101
	Examined	100 files
	Examined	150 files
	Examined	200 files
	Examined	250 files
	Examined	300 files
	Examined	350 files
	Examined	400 files
	Examined	450 files
	Examined	500 files
	Examined	550 files

No files have one or more items; file list includes 558 files.

One or more terms were invalid in 2 files.

• Your SELECT statement is:

```
s (((do()it()yourself) or (weekend()warrior? ?) or
(home()improvement)) (2n)project? ?) and ((cost? ? or price? ? or pricing or
expense? ?) (3n)material? ?)) not py>1999
```

Items	File
-----	-----
1	9: Business & Industry(R)_Jul/1994-2004/May 25
1	13: BAMP_2004/May W1
4	15: ABI/Inform(R)_1971-2004/May 26
Processing	
9	16: Gale Group PROMT(R)_1990-2004/May 26
Processing	
Processing	
Processing	
Processing	
5	20: Dialog Global Reporter_1997-2004/May 26
23	47: Gale Group Magazine DB(TM)_1959-2004/May 25
1	75: TGG Management Contents(R)_86-2004/May W3
Examined 50 files	
4	88: Gale Group Business A.R.T.S._1976-2004/May 25
3	141: Readers Guide_1983-2004/May
Examined 100 files	
2	147: The Kansas City Star_1995-2003/Sep 26
Processing	
Processing	
31	148: Gale Group Trade & Industry DB_1976-2004/May 26
1	149: TGG Health&Wellness DB(SM)_1976-2004/May W3
1	160: Gale Group PROMT(R)_1972-1989
2	180: Federal Register_1985-2004/May 26
Examined 150 files	
1	247: ONTAP(R) Gale Group Magazine Index(TM)_
1	256: SoftBase:Reviews,Companies&Prods._82-2004/Apr
Examined 200 files	
1	348: EUROPEAN PATENTS_1978-2004/May W03

Set	Items	Description
S1	91	((((DO()IT()YOURSELF) OR (WEEKEND()WARRIOR? ?) OR (HOME()IMPROVEMENT)) (2N)PROJECT? ?) AND ((COST? ? OR PRICE? ? OR PRICING OR EXPENSE? ?) (3N)MATERIAL? ?)) NOT PY>1999
S2	70	RD (unique items) <i>KWZ</i>
File	9:Business & Industry(R)	Jul/1994-2004/May 25 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File	13:BAMP 2004/May W1	(c) 2004 The Gale Group
File	15:ABI/Inform(R)	1971-2004/May 26 (c) 2004 ProQuest Info&Learning
File	16:Gale Group PROMT(R)	1990-2004/May 26 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File	20:Dialog Global Reporter	1997-2004/May 26 (c) 2004 The Dialog Corp.
File	47:Gale Group Magazine DB(TM)	1959-2004/May 25 (c) 2004 The Gale group
File	75:TGG Management Contents(R)	86-2004/May W3 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File	88:Gale Group Business A.R.T.S.	1976-2004/May 25 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File	141:Readers Guide	1983-2004/May (c) 2004 The HW Wilson Co
File	147:The Kansas City Star	1995-2003/Sep 26 (c) 2003 Kansas City Star
File	148:Gale Group Trade & Industry DB	1976-2004/May 26 (c)2004 The Gale Group
File	149:TGG Health&Wellness DB(SM)	1976-2004/May W3 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File	160:Gale Group PROMT(R)	1972-1989 (c) 1999 The Gale Group
File	180:Federal Register	1985-2004/May 26 (c) 2004 format only The DIALOG Corp
File	247:ONTAP(R)	Gale Group Magazine Index(TM) (c) 1999 The Gale Group
File	256:SoftBase:Reviews,Companies&Prods.	82-2004/Apr (c)2004 Info.Sources Inc
File	348:EUROPEAN PATENTS	1978-2004/May W03 (c) 2004 European Patent Office

• Your SELECT statement is:

s (((cost(2n)benefit)(5n)(home()improvement))(s)(contractor? ? or
professional)(s)((do(2n)yourself) or oneself or (on()own))) not py>1999

Items	File
-----	-----
Examined 50 files	
Examined 100 files	
Examined 150 files	
Examined 200 files	
Examined 250 files	
Examined 300 files	
Examined 350 files	
Examined 400 files	
Examined 450 files	
Examined 500 files	
Examined 550 files	

No files have one or more items; file list includes 558 files.
One or more terms were invalid in 101 files.

• Your SELECT statement is:
s (((cost(2n)benefit)(5n)(project? ?))(s)(contractor? ? or
professional)(s)((do(2n)yourself) or oneself or (on()own))) not py>1999

Items	File
-----	-----

Processing
Processing
Processing
Processing
Processing

Examined 50 files

Examined 100 files

Processing

1 180: Federal Register_1985-2004/May 26

Examined 150 files

Examined 200 files

Examined 250 files

Examined 300 files

kwz

2/9/3 (Item 1 from file: 15)
DIALOG(R) File 15:ABI/Inform(R)
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01555335 02-06324

These old Web sites

Pack, Thomas

Link-Up v15n1 PP: 32 Jan/Feb 1998 ISSN: 0739-988X JRNL CODE: LUP

DOC TYPE: Journal article LANGUAGE: English LENGTH: 1 Pages

WORD COUNT: 1247

ABSTRACT: Cyberspace offers a world of digital data for people who want to use traditional tools to enhance or transform their physical living spaces. Hundreds of sites provide tips and techniques for **home improvement projects** ranging from repairing foundations to installing skylights. The This Old House Web site includes information on projects featured on the show and a bulletin board. Perhaps the best site affiliated with a television program is Hometime. Other Web sites offering home improvement tips and guidelines are discussed.

TEXT: Headnote:

Home pages for home improvements

2 "Man is a tool-using animal... Without tools he is nothing, with tools he is all."

3 Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle wrote the above quote in the early 1830s. I wonder what he would think about the Internet. It is, of course, one of the most powerful tools ever developed. As you know, people are using it to enhance and transform commerce, education, art, entertainment, and even the concept of community. Where are you when you're online? Yes, you're sitting in front of a computer in the physical world, but you're also present in the electronic community we call cyberspace.

4 So it is perhaps ironic that cyberspace offers a world of digital data for people who want to use traditional tools to enhance or transform their physical living spaces. Hundreds of sites provide tips and techniques for **home improvement projects** ranging from repairing foundations to installing skylights.

This Old House

5 This Old House, the home-renovation television program produced by WGBH Boston, has a Web site (<http://www.pathfinder.com/TOH>) sponsored by Time Warner, which publishes the This Old House magazine. The site includes information on projects featured on the show as well as an Encyclopedia, which offers articles from past issues of the magazine. You also can access a bulletin board where you can discuss everything from mortar to mortises to mortgages. According to an online notice, the site has been "taking a temporary break from putting up articles found in the current issues of our magazine. Don't worry, though; we'll maintain our popular bulletin boards and our Encyclopedia of articles from issues through Jan/Feb 1997."

6 Why did they stop adding articles? No matter. Former This Old House host Bob Vila has a better site anyway (<http://www.bobvila.com/>). It features a How-To section with information on improvements you can make inside, outside, and all around the house.

7 The How To section also includes an Expert Advice subsection. It contains information from trade associations and professional organizations. The Talking Tools subsection offers tool tips. Some of the entries include online video of tools in action. The Calculation subsection includes conversion tables, workshop reference charts, and-coming soon-Internet enabled calculators that "will simplify preparation efforts for your next project by helping you estimate job **costs** and **materials** required before you begin."

Internet
calculators

A separate Projects Online section provides histories of and plans for

8 Bob's projects. The Ask Bob section is a bit of a disappointment because you don't really get to interact with Bob. But you can read FAQs, browse Bob's Tips, or post a question on a BBS. You also can search the entire site with keywords and Boolean techniques. Hometime

9 Perhaps the best site affiliated with a television program is Hometime (<http://www.hometime.com>). It has offered how-to information and summaries of past TV programs since December 1995. The site's editors recently remodeled the place because statistics showed them "the vast majority of people come to our site looking for project information, so all our redevelopment efforts have been devoted to making that info faster and easier to access."

10 The result is that the home page now provides quick and easy access to project information in 12 "QuickStart" categories: Basement Projects, Construction Basics, Decks & Patios, Flooring, Home Maintenance, Home Technology, Kitchens & Baths, Landscape & Garden, Building & Additions, Paint & Decorating, Plumbing & Electrical, and Workshop & Storage. The project information you'll find in the categories is detailed and often includes photos. Besides browsing the categories, you can search the entire site or portions of it with keywords.

The Hometime Users Forum is the place to "share home improvement questions, answers, and ideas." The Forum topics are designed to match the 12 QuickStart Categories found on the site's home page. The Hometime Store is the place to buy books, clothing, tools, and instructional videos based on the TV programs.

Encyclopedia of tips & techniques

11 A site affiliated with a magazine is the Home Improvement Encyclopedia from Better Homes and Gardens Online (<http://www.bhglive.com/homeimp/>). The encyclopedia offers information in the categories Home Improvement Basics, House Structure, Decks, Plumbing, Electrical & Phone, Yard Structures, Landscape, Tool Dictionary, and Project Calculators.

12 If you have the Shockwave plug-in, you can watch animations in some of the articles. For example, an animation in the painting article will show you how to tell a high-quality brush from a low-quality one. Some articles also include money-saving tips (e.g., "Don't discard worn brushes, just downgrade them over time. A brush that's not good enough for topcoats is fine for priming; after that, it can become a dust brush for cleanup.")

13 The site offers several online Project Calculators, including a Paint Estimator, a Drywall Estimator, and a Lumber Cost Estimator. Calculators that will be added to the site soon include a Concrete Estimator and a Wallpaper Estimator. The encyclopedia's Tool Dictionary provides tips on selecting and using power, hand, specialty, and rental tools. The only downside to the site is the annoying, continually changing advertising banner that takes up the bottom section of your screen.

Project Calculators

Directories

14 The BH&G Guide to Building/Remodeling (<http://www.bhglive.com/guidpags/guidmain.html>) is a directory to other Web sites in the following categories: Building Materials, Building Techniques, Care/Maintenance, New Homes, Remodeling, Repair, and Tools.

15 The contents of the BH&G Home Improvement Encyclopedia are copyrighted by Books That Work (<http://www.sierra.com/titles/btw/letter.html>), a company that publishes home improvement CD-ROMs. Books That Work has its own Web site called Home Central (<http://www.homecentral.com>), which features its own annotated directory of hundreds of home-related Web sites. You also can find information on tools, online calculators, and a How-To section with illustrated and Shockwave-animated guides to projects.

directory of web sites

The Magellan Internet Guide offers several reviews of home improvement Web sites. Visit the home page (<http://www.mckinley.com/>) and then select the following categories and subcategories: Life & Style; Advice, How-to, & Self-Help; Home Improvement.

16 Build.com (<http://www.build.com>) is a "directory and search engine for building and home improvement products and information." The site lists links to more than 1,000 companies and organizations. The links are divided into such categories as Baths, Building Materials, Doors and Windows, Floors, Heating and Cooling, Decor, Repair, Home Technology, Kitchen, Light and Electricity, Other Rooms, Outdoor Building, Paint and Wallcoverings, Tools, and Yard and Garden. You can browse the categories, search them, or search the entire site. Build.com also hosts HomeTalk, a building and home improvement discussion forum.

17 Some specialty building materials sites offer a great deal of useful information. For example, the National Wood Flooring Association (<http://www.woodfloors.org>) sponsors a site with details on wood flooring choices, species, and grades. You also can find out about custom installations, recycled floors, finishes, maintenance, repairing scratches, and removing stains. You even can "Consult a Wood Flooring Professional" for personalized advice.

18 The site sponsored by the National Electrical Contractors Association (<http://www.necanet.org>) offers not only information for professionals but also a Find A Contractor search engine that can help you locate a professional in your area.

Find a
Contractor

19 At the Faucet Outlet Online Home Page (<http://www.faucet.com/faucet>) you can browse and order from the company's 38,000-item inventory. The site also offers tips on selecting a faucet, provides information on basic plumbing, and hosts FaucetTalk, "a discussion forum for faucets and fixtures."

online
orders

20 Whatever type of home - improvement project you're working on, you'll find that the Web can be one of the right tools for the job.

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06679582 Supplier Number: 55905371 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)
Best man: Do It Best Corp., based in Fort Wayne, is a \$2.2 billion national hardware cooperative. (Cover Story)

Kaelble, Steve
Indiana Business Magazine, v43, n8, p6(9)
August, 1999
ISSN: 0273-7930
Language: English Record Type: Fulltext
Article Type: Cover Story
Document Type: Magazine/Journal; Trade
Word Count: 2977
TEXT:

1 This isn't rocket science. It's hardware - hammers, nails, screwdrivers, paint. What could be cutting edge about a business as old and traditional as the neighborhood hardware store?

2 Plenty. And in this business a lot of the innovations are coming from Fort Wayne, home of Do It Best Corp., a wholesale hardware cooperative owned by independent hardware retailers. With retailing in general falling increasingly under the spell of big-box stores and e-commerce, Do It Best gives the locals running the corner hardware store not just products to sell but the marketing tools they need to be competitive.

3 For those stores that sign up, a relationship with Do It Best Corp. can even provide an identity, as a "Do It Best" store or a "Do It Center." It's kind of a happy medium blending the advantages of a chain operation with the charm and control of an independent retailer. And the latest twist from Do It Best: hardware sales on the Internet, something a small, local hardware store is unlikely to achieve on its own.

4 It all adds up to a healthy and growing business. Do It Best Corp. this summer celebrated a major sales milestone, crossing the \$2 billion mark for the first time ever and finishing the fiscal year with \$2.2 billion. The wholesaler serves some 4,200 stores nationwide, having added 700 through its 1998 acquisition of Our Own Hardware, another cooperative. It's moving up on the No. 2 group of independents, Ace Hardware, which serves more than 5,000 stores and reported sales of \$3.1 billion in 1998. The industry leader, TruServ, had 1998 revenues totaling \$4.3 billion and more than 10,000 stores sporting such names as True Value, Coast to Coast, ServiStar and Grand Rental Station. Ace and TruServ both are based in the Chicago area.

5 "The first thing you have to understand about Do It Best is we're a member-owned company. We're not publicly traded and not a family-owned company," says Mike McClelland, the cooperative's president and CEO since 1992. "A member is a retail store. They own our company, and all year long they are our customers. We need to provide them products and services. But at the end of the year they expect a solid return on their investment, and we pay dividends to members in the form of rebate dollars."

6 It's a profit-sharing sort of arrangement that can be quite lucrative for member stores. "One member in Michigan last year got a check for \$765,000," McClelland says. "He had purchased some \$7 million of product from us. He used those rebate dollars to buy another store and renovate an existing store."

7 And that kind of development, McClelland knows, is the key to the long-term success of Do It Best. "Our future is based on helping our members to expand."

INDEPENDENT OPERATORS

8 Walk into a hardware store or lumberyard served by Do It Best Corp. and one thing is clear from the start: the store is an independent operation. It may say "Do It Best" above the door, but it also is likely to carry someone else's name, like Sullivan or Bender or Russell. Unlike a chain of company-owned and/or franchised operations, such as McDonald's, the member/owners of Do It Best Corp. reveal plenty of their own ideas and personalities in their individual stores.

9 "Compared to a chain operation, one of the major differences is that a chain operation is largely controlled by corporate headquarters. Headquarters dictates the products and what they are selling for and profits go back to headquarters," McClelland observes. "In our type of

operation, independent stores truly are independent. They decide what products they'll supply. We have standards that they must adhere to, but they are independent retailers."

	Annual	Sales Stores
True Value	\$4.3 billion	10,000+
Ace	\$3.1 billion	5,000+
Do It Best	\$2.2 billion	4,200

And that suits people in this business quite well, says Jim Robisch, senior partner in charge of retailing and wholesaling research and consulting at the Farnsworth Group, an Indianapolis firm specializing in the home improvement and repair industry. "Independent hardware dealers are very conservative," he observes.

But that doesn't mean they can't benefit from some cooperative efforts. That's why Do It Best's services go beyond simply providing the products that these stores sell. One of the most visible efforts is the branding program Do It Best offers its members. The program began back when the company was known as Hardware Wholesalers Inc., and offers retailers the opportunity to call themselves "Do It Centers" or "I)o It Best" stores. The program came full-circle last year when Hardware Wholesalers Inc. officially changed its name to Do It Best Corp. to reflect the branding strategy.

"The way it started was back in about 1980 we went to a meeting in Columbus, Ohio, put on by Management Horizons, a consultant in the retail industry," McClelland says. The company hooked up with a consultant named Don Watt, whose other clients through the years have included Steak n Shake, Wal-Mart and Home Depot. "He showed what he would do to take the store and turn it into an advertising asset."

The resulting "Do It" concept had a trial at four stores in the early 1980s, and customers responded well. Do It Best Corp. also began providing private-label products and discovered that shoppers viewed them as a better value, even if they were priced only slightly below name brands.

Pat Sullivan, second-generation owner of Sullivan Hardware Do It Centers in Indianapolis, is a firm believer in the branding program. He calls his stores' switch to the Do It Center concept in the mid-1980s a "turning point" toward greater success. "These programs, coupled with a low-cost operation, are a huge advantage within the industry. There was a study that showed the average first-year sales increase from a vanilla hardware store to a Do It Center is 39 percent," he says.

Do It Best Corp. brings other chain-style advantages as well. "We have retail development specialists and one of their functions is to try to bring together members in a local community. One function is to do some pool buying," McClelland says. "The flip-side is to advertise." For example, Do It Best members in the Indianapolis area this summer have been banding together to buy radio spots, something that otherwise might be prohibitively expensive for small retailers.

NEW TOOL FOR HARDWARE STORES

Another thing the average corner hardware store can't do on its own is venture into e-commerce. But Do It Best Corp. merged into the travel lanes of the Infobahn last month with the debut of what it calls the "World's Largest Hardware Store," an Internet site at www.doitbest.com that's peddling some 70,000 hardware and building products.

Nearly half of all households have computers, McClelland notes, and consumers last year bought \$15 billion worth of goods on-line. "Three years ago, Amazon.com didn't exist, but today that company dominates the book category over the Internet. We want to help our member-retailers dominate the on-line hardware category."

The site offers not only products but **do - it - yourself** advice and **project** tips, including articles and video clips. Orders are shipped from Do It Best's retail service centers across the country. For items that can't be shipped via UPS (such as some building materials), customers are directed to a nearby Do It Best store that can arrange delivery.

"For any store that signs up, you have a web site and if people enter from your web site and shop and buy something, the store gets a 12 percent commission or rebate and that customer is yours for life," Sullivan says. Members who are part of the Internet venture also collect customers in nearby ZIP codes who enter through the main Web address.

BATTLING THE BIG BOXES

The competitive environment in which Do It Best members operate

21 shares some similarities with other retail sectors, but has some significant differences as well. Like stores that sell appliances or books or hobby supplies, hardware stores have watched so-called "big-box" retailers move into their neighborhoods. But in the business of hardware, these big boxes haven't lived up to the other nickname often applied to giant chain stores: "category killers." It's tough these days to find an independent bookstore or a local variety store on the courthouse square, but the local hardware store is anything but dead.

22 How can this be? As it turns out, corner hardware stores and such big boxes as Home Depot, Lowe's and Menard's are not as direct competitors as those outside the industry might guess. Ellen Hackney, communications director at the Indianapolis-based National Retail Hardware Association and Home Center Institute, says the overall industry can be divided into three distinct segments: hardware stores, home centers and lumberyards/building-materials vendors. View it as a continuum and hardware stores are on one side, lumberyards on the other, with the big-box home centers holding the middle ground.

23 "There are 44,000-plus units, and about half are hardware stores," she says. The industry as a whole had estimated sales totaling \$145.3 billion last year, she says, with about \$22 billion at hardware stores, \$71 billion at home centers and \$52 billion at lumberyards and building-materials outlets. It may seem like hardware stores are being squashed by the others, but Hackney says it's not an apples-to-apples comparison because many hardware stores don't sell high-priced building materials or big-ticket power tools. In general, the product count at hardware stores is significantly smaller than at home centers, about 15,000 compared to about 45,000.

24 Sales in all three segments have been growing and are expected to continue expanding, even though store numbers are not. "There has been a decline of about 10 percent in the number of hardware store units in the last 20 years, but often for reasons other than competition from large chains," she says. For one thing, they often are family businesses and sometimes don't survive retirement. And the decline in stores isn't limited to the hardware segment. "Home centers and the lumber and building materials segments are also seeing a leveling off, and we anticipate something of a decline in units in those segments."

25 One reason the little guys are still in good health is that a lot of people get lost in the big stores. "About half of the American population likes to shop in larger stores. The other half would prefer to shop in smaller stores, where it's easier to get in and get out and get more attention," McClelland says.

26 "In more and more surveys, one of the main reasons people don't like to shop big-box stores is the security issue," he continues. "They don't like to be in a large parking lot. They want to park close to the store."

27 Also, customers often feel they get better service in a smaller store, which may have such things as screen-repair or tool-rental programs. "The big boxes don't like to sell anything that takes a lot of time," McClelland says. Choosing paint colors and mixing paint can be time-consuming, and while the home centers sell custom-colored paint, they may not be able to spend as much time with each customer. "A lot of times our members' largest-selling department will be the paint department. The employees are willing to spend time."

28 "Our product mix is similar" to that at a chain store, Sullivan says, "but because of the convenient size of the store and the help we provide, we've been able to coexist. Most of our customers also shop the big chain stores."

29 Proof that smaller stores have a solid niche is the move by Home Depot, the biggest player in the business, to open its own chain of smaller stores, called Villagers Hardware. "It's literally taking a larger approach to a market that has been well served by independents," Robisch says.

30 In any case, it's the profit that matters more than anything, and in this department hardware stores are doing just fine. "We see hardware stores getting bigger and the average sales per store are growing," says Hackney, whose organization conducts a member survey on the cost of doing business. "Stores are more productive and more profitable. The top hardware stores' performance figures are as good as and in some cases better than the big chains'."

THE HARDWARE MAN

Mike McClelland joined Hardware Wholesalers Inc. 25 years ago. "I was

31 an assistant in our personnel department. I spent seven years in human resources and in the early 1980s got involved in our sales area. I was made vice president of sales in 1981 and in the mid-80s assumed responsibility for marketing. I became executive vice president in 1987, and president and CEO in 1992."

32 The hardware chief was born and raised in Logansport, earned a bachelor's degree from Ball State in 1969 and a master's from Saint Francis College in 1972. But his interest in the business of building started long before that.

33 "I've always enjoyed building things, even as a kid," he recalls. "A lot of times we didn't have much money so we would take old crates apart and straighten up the nails to reuse them."

34 Now that he sells nails, he still enjoys home improvement. "It's very enjoyable. I had a lake cottage and built a deck on it and put on vinyl siding," he says. More recently he helped do some work at a home in Bloomington that his son bought. Of course, he bought the supplies at local Do It Best member stores.

35 "One of my other hobbies is working on old cars," he says. He fixed up a 1956 Corvette and currently is looking for a 1965-or-so Corvette to work on. He also has a vehicle a good bit more rare. "I have a 1951 Willys station wagon. The company that made it was Willys Overland Corp., which made Jeeps during World War II."

BUILDING A HISTORY

36 Do It Best Corp. was the creation of a Fort Wayne native named Arnold Gerberding, who was born in 1900 and got into the hardware business immediately after high school. He got a job at Pfeiffer Hardware in Fort Wayne, then worked as a buyer at Schafer Hardware in Decatur. He became intrigued with the growing power of dealer-owned cooperatives, which had sprung up in the early years of the century and had become quite numerous by the 1930s.

37 Gerberding began to dream of launching his own dealer-owned cooperative, and began signing up members, aiming for an initial goal of 75. In June 1945, a group of early investors gathered in Fort Wayne to form the new corporation, which Gerberding wanted to call Royal Hardware Co. to suggest quality and distinction. He was outvoted, however, and the corporation took on the more generic name Hardware Wholesalers Inc., which it held until it became Do It Best Corp. just last year.

38 "Arnold Gerberding was the founder and was president for 20 years," McClelland says. "My predecessor, Don Wolf, became employed here in 1947 and was president from 1967 until 1992." Though the company joined the billion-dollar club only in the past decade, McClelland gives a lot of credit to the example set by Gerberding and carried on by Wolf. "After Mr. Gerberding retired I asked him what was the secret to his success. He said, 'In 20 years I never told a lie to anybody.' And Don Wolf's focus was the customer and how can we grow the company so we can provide more for our members."

39 McClelland carries on a business philosophy that he acknowledges may sound old-fashioned and corny to some: "Our philosophy is to serve others as you would want to be served," he says. "People always help each other and will drop what they are doing to help a member."

40 He recalls a story he used to tell before he had climbed the ladder to the top rung: "If I walk into my office and there are three messages on my desk - one says call a member, the second says call the president of the company and the third says call my wife - I'd always call the member first, and then depending on what kind of mood my wife was in when I left the house I'd either call the president or call my wife."

41 He rattles off other philosophies that he thinks have made the company the success that it is today. "We've always been a very fiscally conservative company. We're a \$2 billion company, yet we have no debt."

42 "One of their claims to fame is that they have the cleanest balance sheet in the industry," agrees Robisch. "It's a well-run company, and very ethical - almost squeaky clean."

43 McClelland also recalls being moved by a 1992 Fortune magazine article titled "Dinosaurs?" The article examined how many of the industrial giants of 20 years earlier had become practically irrelevant because their leaders had become complacent. "It was the most important article I've ever read."

44 Complacency is not a problem at Do It Best Corp. New ideas such as the Internet venture continue to flow from corporate headquarters, members

continue to change stores into Do It Best or Do It Center outlets, a seventh distribution center is opening soon while an eighth is in the works, and sales keep growing. The \$2.2 billion recorded in the just-ended fiscal year is a 16.5 percent increase, or \$308 million, over a year earlier.

45 There's plenty, of opportunity for continued growth, McClelland says, some through adding stores and members and a lot through demographic trends. "We see great growth opportunities from the Baby Boom population. And more than 50 percent of the homes in America are more than 30 years old," and thus are prime candidates for home improvement. "Our goal is to double our volume today by the year 2006."

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2/9/43 (Item 3 from file: 640)
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THE PITFALLS OF DOING IT YOURSELF LEARN ABOUT JOB BEFORE TRYING TO TACKLE IT

San Francisco Chronicle (SF) - WEDNESDAY, February 2, 1994

By: HAL PORTER, Weekend Remodeler: New York Times Special Features/
SyndicationSales.

Edition: FINAL Section: Home Page: 7/Z1

Word Count: 1,056

MEMO:

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Syndication Sales.

TEXT:

At one time or another, most homeowners will confront the dilemma of whether to do it themselves or hire a pro.

Painting a room and hanging shelves are standard fare for do-it-yourselfers. But larger projects may arouse nervous fears.

Will the new bathroom tiles fall off the wall? Can I replace the drywall after I open up a large hole? Will I fry myself if I try to change an electrical outlet? Will I burn the house down? Will the job look right when I finish?

In other words, how do you decide when you should do the job yourself and when you should hire a professional?

"In principle, there is very little an individual can't do or learn to do," says Tim Snider, a contractor specializing in historic restorations and a home - improvement editor. "But it may take much, much longer than hiring a professional."

For complex projects involving a number of trades, such as rebuilding a kitchen, Snider says, "I would hate to see a novice act as a general contractor. For one thing, he or she probably wouldn't save any money."

Snider does, however, encourage those embarking on a project to challenge themselves to learn new skills.

"If you've done it before, or if hardware-store personnel can tell you how to do it, then you can attempt a project."

You may be able to go further. Many sources of information offer practical advice to do-it-yourselfers: books and magazines, brochures, videos, clinics sponsored by home-center stores, courses at community colleges, even owner-builder schools for the truly serious.

Before you leap into a project, take inventory of your skills and determine what new skills you may have to develop in the process.

TIME AND MONEY

"As a rule of thumb, it will take even a skillful amateur two or three times as long as a pro to perform most jobs," says Paul Spring, a former contractor and editor who is now a product manager for a toolmaking firm.

This estimate does not include the time required to plan your work, to make extra trips to the hardware store to rent tools or to get parts that most tradespeople have in their tool kit.

Spring also points out that while a professional will be working full time on a project, most homeowners have other jobs. Therefore, projects may extend over weeks instead of days.

"If the work is in a kitchen or other high-traffic area, be sure that you and your significant other are realistically prepared for the possible

duration of the project," Spring says.

15 People who psychologically need tasks to be completed in a short period might stick to smaller projects.

16 Finally, for some people, time literally is money.

17 Those who frequently bring work home from the office or work out of their homes might find their careers or incomes adversely affected by lengthy do-it-yourself projects.

18 On relatively simple jobs, however, you can save substantially by doing the job yourself instead of calling in a professional for an hour or two.

19 A critical issue is whether the quality of workmanship will meet your expectations if you tackle a project yourself.

20 When the work mainly involves a mechanical system -- electrical work, for example, or plumbing -- the biggest fear is probably of a disaster such as a flood or a fire down the road.

21 But this common fear may be overblown.

22 Work carefully. Test the plumbing work thoroughly before you close up walls, for example. And don't attempt jobs requiring high skill levels unless you understand the tasks involved.

23 A more common issue for do-it-yourselfers is cosmetic: Will the job look as good as you want it to?

24 While the answer is highly subjective, Bryan Patchen, the executive director of the National Association of Home Builders Remodelers Council, says that for maximum resale value, workmanship should at least equal industry standards.

25 Even the simplest project can turn a space upside down, producing unexpected quantities of dirt, dust and noise. Larger projects can mean major disruptions of your life.

26 Tolerance for these disruptions is also a highly subjective variable.

27 Doing the work themselves gives some people a sense of control over their lives, while others might feel more comfortable letting a professional take over so that the disruptions will be ended more quickly.

28 Sometimes you can do it yourself in addition to hiring a pro. You reserve the highly skilled work for a contractor and then do the rest yourself. This division of labor may save you money while ensuring that you don't get in over your head. In addition, you get the satisfaction of having helped create your living environment with your own hands.

29 Whether this option is viable or not will depend on your relationship with the contractor. Some contractors don't feel comfortable letting their schedules depend on a nonprofessional completing his or her tasks on time.

OWNER-CONTRACTOR

30 When considering a complex project, many people are tempted to act as their own general contractor.

31 While some homeowners want to take direct control of a project, cutting costs is the usual motive. By eliminating the person in the middle and hiring various tradespeople directly, the reasoning goes, the project should cost less.

32 For simple jobs involving only one or two trades, you may not require an intermediary to supervise the work.

33 More demanding projects involving a variety of skills and trades -- such as a room addition or the rebuilding of a kitchen or bath -- require more consideration. For such projects, a homeowner must evaluate whether he

or she will really save money by acting as the general contractor.

34 Usually, he or she does not.

35 A general contractor converts plans into a completed project; hires subcontractors; purchases and schedules the delivery of materials and supervises all work done.

36 He or she has existing relationships with local tradespeople and suppliers.

37 Perhaps most importantly, the general contractor can most efficiently schedule the order in which subcontractors complete their work.

38 Unless you have a great deal of experience with the construction trades, hire a general contractor.

CAPTION:
PHOTO

TIME SACRIFICE: While home remodelers can complete many projects themselves -- painting is one of the less demanding -- it may take them more time than it does for professionals

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2/9/64 (Item 19 from file: 148)
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04145517 SUPPLIER NUMBER: 07920327 (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)
DIY deck design boosts sales, credibility; customers draft plans, complete with materials list and cost estimate. (computer kiosk for home center stores helps customers plan a do-it-yourself deck design)
Chain Store Age Executive with Shopping Center Age, v65, n9, p57(3)
Sept, 1989
ISSN: 0193-1199 LANGUAGE: ENGLISH . RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT
WORD COUNT: 1880 LINE COUNT: 00140

TEXT:

Many people who come into a home center thinking about building a backyard patio deck may have only a vague, y-formed idea of what they want it to look like.

What size and shape should it be? What types of steps, stairs or railings should it have? Should it be more than one level? How high off the ground should it go?

"People have trouble visualizing the designs that are possible," says John Vetter, executive vp at Itasca, Ill.-based Edward Hines Lumber

"Salesmen have a very hard time describing them. True, there's promotional literature available from lumber manufacturers that has photos of attractive decks. But those illustrate only a limited number of styles," Vetter says.

Enter the Innovis Design Center: A custom computer that, based on consumer input can design a deck in minutes and then display the design in color on a screen. Further, it can accompany the design with a complete list of needed materials, and a full totaling of costs based on the store's price structure.

The product is marketed by Innovis Interactive Technologies, a subsidiary of Weyerhaeuser, the Tacoma, Wash.-based lumber supplier

"The DesignCenter helps turn the consumer's vague sense of what he wants into a specific plan," Says Lou Price, owner of Ridgefield Supply Ridgefield, Conn. "It makes designing a deck easy and attractive. We've had great success with it."

Consumers never use the DesignCenter alone, but are guided by a salesperson, Price notes. This is not because the process is complicated, but to reduce the incidence of people using the machine for their own purposes, then leaving without ordering materials-but with a completed design and materials list in hand.

"We purposely designed the machine with the salesman in the loop," says Mark Lembersky, Innovis resident and founder "We wanted it to be the salesman's tool. Only he can make the sales pitch, and only the salesman can judge whether the customer is serious about buying."

Making choices: The system is simple to use, says Lembersky, because it's structured like a video game. Instead of a keyboard, there's a control pad with a button and a ball. The pad is kept in a compartment that the salesman can lock. Together, the button and ball allow the user to sketch designs and make choices.

The first choice the user makes is whether the deck should be attached to the house or freestanding. The user maneuvers the ball to point to a picture of either an attached or freestanding deck, then pushes a button to enter the choice.

The user then continues:

- * to sketch the deck,
- * to determine what kind of stairs and railings to add and where,
- * to select styles of decking (such as 2x4 vs. 2x6, or horizontal vs. vertical),
- * to indicate height.

In each case, the button is pushed to enter the selection and go on to the next screen.

"It's like a sophisticated version of the Etch-a-Sketch toy," says Lembersky. "While there's a feeling of making choices, there's never a feeling of being asked questions. It's simple enough so that anyone seeing it once could easily figure out how to do it themselves the next time."

Based on the choices made by the user, the DesignCenter renders structural engineering computations, and then in an instant, an image of

the chosen deck appears on the screen.

The three-dimensional image can be manipulated so that the user can get a bird's eye view, a look underneath and a wide variety of angles in between.

The user can continue to screens that provide a complete **materials** list and a **price**. If the price seems too high, the user can go back into the system and scale down the deck. If the price is low compared to what the customer can spend, the user can go back and add more features, or increase the deck's overall size.

Once the consumer is satisfied with the deck, the salesman can create a hard copy including a construction plan, a color illustration and a materials list.

"I've never seen a point-of-sale promotional device more enthusiastically received by our managers and sales people," says Vetter of Hines LUM ten

"They say it's just fascinating to see a deck designed on a computer that way. Without exception, every home center manager we've shown the DesignCenter to has been excited about it. The question for us was never whether we wanted the machines, but how soon we could get them."

Vetter says Hines has the DesignCenter in 13 of its 24 stores. The stores are all within a 60-mile radius of Chicago, and are 8,000-28,000 sq. ft. Those stores that don't have the DesignCenter are inner city stores where few customers have use for backyard decks.

The proof of the DesignCenter's success is in the bottom line, says Vetter. Though treated deck sales in the Chicago market have been flat this year, he says Hines sales have been up 25%. Vetter attributes much of the increase to the DesignCenter, which Hines installed in January.

"The machine occupies a very prominent spot in our stores, so that anyone who's been there knows we have one. We leave it on most of the time—customers find it fascinating to look at. We've also advertised it in newspapers," Vetter says.

An important side benefit of the DesignCenter, he says, is that "we can now estimate the **materials** and **costs** needed for decks within a few minutes, where it used to take hours. We used to have to assign someone to figure it out and then call the customer back."

Price of Ridgefield Supply, a single-store operator with annual sales of about \$8 million, points out, "The computer gives our estimates credibility. When we tell customers what a deck will cost, they believe it. When we hand them a materials list, they're not skeptical that we've overestimated what they need."

Another benefit is image-oriented, Price says. "When people see the machine, it gives them the idea that we're a progressive company in tune with the latest technology."

Price says that more than 50% of customers who use the machine ultimately make an order. Those who don't, usually are people who just want an idea of what it means to make a deck, or who want a feel for price.

About 40% of customers who order after using the machine are do-it-yourselfers planning to build their own decks, Price says. The remaining 60% are professional contractors.

"They like to show their customers the hard copy from the computer—it looks very professional," Price says. "We don't do it with courage that, but it's understood that if they're going to use the machine, then they're going to make their order with us."

Those customers who do not intend to order their materials at the store, but nonetheless want a hard copy of the material list or an, are charged up to \$100 for the documents. If the customer later decides to order materials after all, the fee for the documents can be applied to the **materials cost**.

As a measure of success, Price says that his store has sold 27% more board footage during the first half of this year than in the first half of last year.

There also have been large increases in sales of incidental deck materials, such as nuts and bolts, nails, and ready-mix cement—items customers previously might have gone elsewhere to buy. Much of this Price attributes to the DesignCenter, which arrived at the store in March.

Price says that two of his salesmen went to a special training session to learn how to use the machine. They, in turn, trained other salesmen at the store to use it.

Salesmen have found, however, that the machine has its limitations.

Says Quinn O'Mara, a Ridge "The Supply salesman, machine will design about 90% of the decks that customers could want, However, it won't design anything other than 90 degree angles , and it won't do more than two levels. More elaborate decks still have to be designed by hand, like in the old days."

Another limitation is height. "For code reasons, we have a 6-ft. height limit," says Innovis Lembersky.

DesignCenter units are placed in home centers under marketing arrangements with Weyerhaeuser, Lembersky says. Arrangements are individual, but the more lumber product the retailer buys from Weyerhaeuser, the more likely the deal will be sweetened.

There are now 125 DesignCenters in stores across the country, and 400 more on order, Lembersky says.

Deck design is only the first of many **home improvement projects** the DesignCenter can tackle.

"There is a series of software for the DesignCenter on the way, including software to design a freestanding garage and software to design shelving units," Lembersky says.

"These are far n g n development and have already been in pilot test. The good thing for retailers is that they can use the same DesignCenter hardware in each case-only the additional software costs extra."

Why was the software for decks released first? "Decks are the No. 1 doit-yourself **home improvement project** ," Lembersky says. "More than with any other major project, people are willing to do it themselves to save contractors' fees."

First of many: Ultimately, Lembersky sees the DesignCenter as only one of the first in a growing number of systems that will allow consumers to take a complex project and see it come to life.

"Right now, the DesignCenter is unique, but five years from now, systems like it will be common. You'll see systems for landscaping, carpeting, tile and furniture. Beauty salons will go beyond the prototype stage with systems that can show a woman what she'd look like with different hair or makeup," Lembersky says.

"There's a lot of fancy technology out there, but the prices vary. The trick is to create something that has power and attractiveness and ease of use, but at a price which can allow to have several hundred in place."

The seedling that grew into the idea for the DesignCenter was planted in 1977 when Lembersky first brought his computer- base concepts to Weyerhaeuser.

The Vision design simulator developed b Lembersky and his associate, Uli Chi, helped loggers make log-cutting decisions on a computer screen. The computer would automatically display the economic consequences of the logger's decision, and then recommend other alternatives.

Vision proved a useful tool, given that the of a tree can vary as much as 50% depending on how it is cut into logs . In the next 10 years, Weyerhaeuser saw more than \$100 Mil n in increased profits from logging, Lembersky says.

"What we are basically doing is using technology to aid the thought and communication process," says Lembersky.

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